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EDITORIAL

Dr. Merrill's Departure

Next November 1 when the resignation of Dr. Malcolm H. Merrill as director of the State Department of Public Health becomes effective, California will lose an outstanding public servant and the California Medical Association will lament the departure of a forthright, thoughtful, considerate man with whom for many years the Association has worked closely and comfortably in the promotion of good health and good health care for the people of this state.

Dr. Merrill's administration has been a continuing demonstration of his full realization of the highest purposes of a department of public health. Under his direction, the department's facilities have been exercised with level-headed recognition that the most salubrious climate for the medical well-being of all the people of this state is generated in mutual respect between the department and the physicians in private practice.

The Health Director has been regularly a welcome guest at meetings of the Council of the CMA. Throughout his tenure as director, all negotiations between the Department of Public Health and the CMA have been carried out in an atmosphere of

understanding conducive to the best use of all health care facilities, public and private.

The stature of Dr. Merrill's department and the excellence of his performance are not mere provincial marvels known only in public health circles and among private practitioners in California; they are well recognized across the land. He is a past president of the Association of State and Territorial Health Officers and of the American Public Health Association. And last year the consummate honor for workers in the field of public health, the Bronfman Prize for Public Health Achievement, was awarded to him.

Again and again he has been called upon as a consultant to other organizations and for the performance of special missions the world over. Recently he was a member of a mission for the United States Agency for International Development to discuss public health and family planning programs in the host countries, India, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand and Turkey.

It was almost inevitable that one with so bright a record of achievement and good will should have many tempting offers of high station elsewhere put before him. Now he has accepted one of them. His resignation was in order that he could accept an appointment with the Federal Government in the Department of State. He will serve in the Medical Research and Development Unit of the Agency for International Development.

Regret his departure though we do, we can take some comfort in the thought that his ability and common-sense will make themselves felt as cogently in his new job as they did in the directorship he soon will quit here.